

## HR PERCEPTION TOWARDS MULTI GENERATION WORKFORCE

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### ABSTRACT

*We are entering a new era in the workforce where the generation of baby boomers and generation x will be gradually and continuously replaced by the latest generation z and generation alfa (from 2010 the kids of now). Multigenerational symbiosis is an often researched yet not fully understood the aspect of Human Resources. Numerous researches have been carried out in various ways on this subject but Arsenault (2004, p.124) argues that generational differences topic is 'plagued by erroneous misconceptions' and as such numerous scholars (Callanan and greenhaus, 2008; Edmunds and Turner, 2005; Giancola, 2006; Haynes, 2011; Smola and Sutton, 2002) have called for additional research in this field. So, there is a need for understanding the differences in work values of employees from generation to generation and identify what is changing to better equip HR practices for it. This research is committed to finding the perception of HR personnel towards various generations in the organization and also to identify the differences in the workplace behavior of multi-generations. The study also suggests best practices for stronger performance of employees of Gen X & Gen Y.*

**KEYWORDS:** Baby Boomers, Multi Generations, Performance & Perception

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### INTRODUCTION

For the first time in modern history, four generation of workers/ employees is working side-by-side, rubbing shoulders in the same space and collaborating on similar projects. Each brings with them a wide range of cultural and generational idiosyncrasies, to the workplace. A multigenerational environment is a new diversity challenge for organizations everywhere. These generational differences can have a positive and negative impact on organizations. Increased creativity, innovation, openness to change, stimulation for alternative thinking, cross-pollination of ideas and better collaboration due to interdependency are some of the strengths that can be leveraged for the competitive advantage in terms of business outcome. On the other hand, conflicts, delayed decision making, dissipation of energy, chaos and dysfunction are likely to increase due to generational diversity. These could result in counterproductive outcomes such as increased attrition of high potential talent, reduced engagement and increased workplace stress. It is this context that gives rise to the need to understand multigenerational diversity from the perspectives of work expectations of the employee, team and the organization.

Each generation is unique in their way of viewing things and doing things which result in more than often clashed between the generations in workplaces. An HR has to handle such occurrences skilfully to avoid permanent damage to the value of organization. Failure in addressing these problems can lead to misunderstandings, miscommunications and mixed signal in the workforce (fyock, 1990). But even HR personnel are human and prone

to prejudice and misconceptions which cloud their judgement in handling difficult situations and as such it is imperative that we need understand the view point of a HR to rectify wrongful misconceptions and remove the bias in workplace due to generational differences in work attitudes and values.

## **GENERATION**

A generational group is often referred to as a cohort, it includes those individuals who share similar historical and social experiences. Such experiences unite people of the same generation; lead them to share common values and many come together to experience the world in similar ways. "Generation" as a construct is elusive and multiple attempts have been made by scholars and practitioners to decipher this phenomenon. One commonly used definition is provided by Kupperschmidt (2000), where a generation is defined as "an identifiable group that shares birth years, age location and significant life events at critical development stages." The dominant literature from the US and parts of Europe assumes that there are 4 generations in the work force, namely, Veterans, Baby boomers, Gen X and Gen Y. (Parry & Urwin, 2011)

The conceptual foundations of the notion of a generation are drawn from sociological theories. Mannheim, (1952) defined a generation as a group of people "who share a common habitus, nexus and culture, a collective memory that serves to integrate." According to Mannheim, (1952) there are two important elements in the term "generation." First a common location in historical time and second a distinct consciousness of that historical position, shaped by events and experiences of that time. (Gilleard, 2004). Different cohorts recall different events and these memories come specifically from adolescence and early adulthood. Generational effects appear to be the result of the intersection of personal and national history (Schuman & Scott, 1989). Studies undertaken in the non-western context were mostly replications of prior research using the four generational categories identified in the western literature. Prior studies in the Indian context attempted to categorize generations, using the widely used four generation classification from the western literature and identifying unique historical events in the Indian context. (Bijarpurkar, 2007; Erickson, 2009; Gosh & Chaudhuri, 2009; Parameswaran, 2003; RoonGrengsuke, 2010).

### **Gen X**

Gen Xers grew up with financial, family and societal insecurities; rapid change; great diversity; and lack of solid traditions. This led to a sense of individualism over collectivism. (Jurkiewicz & Brown, 1998) Influenced greatly by seeing their parents laid-off, they are cynical and untrusting. (Cooper Schmidt, 2000). They have feelings of pragmatism, alienation and cynicism. (Sirias & Karp, 2007). This generation is considered poor at networking and somewhat skeptical of authority. (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). Many of the viewpoints this generation has towards authority, corporations and worklife balance have to do with the breakdown of institutions such as marriage and with corporate downsizing, that most likely affected one or both of their parents. (Patota, Schwartz & Schwartz, 2007). They are at present the oldest generation besides baby boomers (who account for very less number due to them largely being retired). Though the generations themselves are defined by many researchers and professors, there is hardly any consensus about the precise time frame for the generations. Strauss & Howe, 1997., assumed generation x are people born in the time frame of 1965-1979, which we shall consider the same for our research.

### **Gen Y**

This young group of managers and potential managers in the workforce today are much different from the

previous two generations. They crave for higher salaries and flexible work arrangements. (Jennings, 2000). One of their strongest trait or viewpoint is the importance of work-life balance (Johnson & Lopes, 2008). Also because these individuals are assumed to be more independent and disloyal, they are considered more likely to switch jobs in order to improve skills for the next opportunity (Johnson & Lopes, 2008). This generation is said to be the first to be born into a wired world. They are “connected” 24 hours a day. (Ryan, 2000). They are blatant, vocal and voice their opinion. They are characterized by a tremendous appetite for work. They are branded for their sense of entitlement, outspokenness, inability to take criticism and technological sophistication. Fortune, in its 28 May, 2007 issue, deemed Gen Y, the most, high maintenance, yet potentially the most, high performing generation in history, because its members are entering the workforce with more information, greater technological skill and higher expectations of themselves and others than their predecessors. In addition, Time in its 16 July, 2007 issue, described members of Gen Y, as wanting the kind of life balance where every minute has meaning.

### **Gen X and Gen Y in India**

Gen X grew up during a time when India witnessed an expansion of telecommunications, space programmes, the software and IT sectors. So the members of Gen X in India developed a mental model patterned on a rich vibrant democracy. The late 1990s and 2000s saw the Indian economy grow under liberalization and reform policies. India became a prestigious educational powerhouse and a respected source of IT talent. As of 2008, 34 Indian companies; and as of 2009, 49 new Indian billionaires were listed on the Forbes Global List. Gen Y in India, born during this period; share the excitement of being a part of the first wave of the broad economic opportunity. As a result, these young employees in India tend to share the rapid tempo of Gen Y’s ambition, but with greater emphasis on the financial reward as the desired outcome. They easily accept the diversity of opinion making them strongly suited for global interaction.

Employees of each generation have their own life experiences that have shaped their values, ethics, and attitude towards work. It is important to be aware of these differences and to understand how these attitudes and expectations of a multigenerational workforce come to play. In recent years, generational differences have received increased media attention. The focus has been on the differences between Gen X and Gen Y, related to work values, work expectations, attitudes to technology, teamwork and leadership styles, as well as the challenges that they pose for organizations. However, there are few systematic studies into generational differences in work values and work behavior, in emerging economies, such as India.

By 2020, the average Indian will only be 29 years of age, compared with 37 in China and the US, 45 in Western Europe and 48 in Japan. Currently, more than half of India’s population is less than 25 years of age. Given India’s population of over a billion, these make for very large numbers. What’s more? These large pools of new workers come with a mindset very different from that of the earlier generation. Experts note that this difference between generations is far more striking in India than elsewhere, because of the country’s rapid pace of liberalization and increasing globalization since the 1990s. India has also leap forged, through tremendous advances in technology, including the adoption of mobile phones, the internet, and social media. (India’s New HR Challenge: Managing a Multigenerational Workforce – Knowledge @ Wharton; Feb 14, 2014).

Vishalli Dongrie, senior director at consulting and services firm Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India, notes: The current generation in India entering the workforce has abundance in options and affluence, early in life. They are also more independent and more aware of global opportunities. This is reflected in the decreasing loyalty towards their employers

and the increasing focus on short-term goals. Globally, the shift has not been so pronounced. As this emerging concern has gained much significance, an increasing number of researches have been undertaken in these areas, resulting in a lot of information being generated. Since a huge chunk of the workforce comprises of Gen X and Gen Y, this research is limited to exploring their job expectations. A brief exposition into the nature and profile of Gen X and Gen Y population is given.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Most companies today have an abundant mixture of generations within their workplace. With each emerging generation come different attitude, work ethic, life experience, set of goals and work expectations. These differences can have both, a positive and negative impact on organizations. Increased creativity, innovation, openness to change, stimulation for alternate thinking, cross-pollination of ideas and better collaboration due to interdependency are some of the strengths that can be leveraged for competitive advantage in terms of business outcomes.

On the other hand, conflicts, delayed decision making, dissipation of energy, chaos, and dysfunction are also likely to increase due to generational diversity. These could result in counterproductive outcomes such as increased attrition of high potential talent, reduced engagement and workplace stress. It is this context that gives rise to the need to understand multi-generational diversity from the perspectives of the employee, the team and the organization.

Managing a workplace with a generational diversity that is seen today, presents its very own unique opportunities and challenges.

To be successful in today's global rivalry market, organizations need to focus more on transforming their working environments to motivate their employees to engage in behavior that is consistent with their goal. Motivating employees in the present day business activities are different from yesteryears because each generation have their own preference in working environment and expectations. Organizations not only need to understand the importance of employees' motivations, they also should comprehend the variances in preferences of motivation factors between various groups of employees' generations. Failure of business leaders in understanding these motivational dynamics that reflect new work requirement and changed employee expectations could result in a decline of organizations' total effectiveness.

Therefore, the business leaders should first wake to the reality of motivational generational diversity and find ways to accept this. Gen Y and Gen X work side by side today, each with their unique work ethics, values, attitudes, ambitions and expectations. Not surprisingly, research shows that each generation approaches work and career in different ways. Generational diversity is becoming an important factor in devising strategies to access talent and impact markets. Creating age diverse workplaces that enable employees of all ages to thrive in a harmonious workplace and contribute to the growth of the organization is the need of the hour.

## **NEED FOR THE STUDY**

A major challenge which faces organizations today is how to motivate, attract, engage, and retain employees belonging to different generations, as each generation brings in a set of distinct work values, ethics, aspirations and expectations and also a different set of work behavior. This study seeks to provide organization leaders and managers with detailed information on the work expectations and preferences of Gen X and Gen Y. It seeks to provide an essential conceptual framework that managers can refer to when anticipating evaluating and resolving organizational work issues between the generations. Understanding the attitudes and preferences of different generations can foster enhanced

employee motivation, employee retention, employee engagement and productivity in the workplace.

Addressing generational issues in the workplace can have a positive effect across various dimension of employee well-being covering issues such as leading workers to produce efficiently and effectively (Zaccaro&Klimoski, 2001) motivating them toward task objectives (House & Mitchell, 1974), and inspiring them to align with and commit to organizational goals (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001). To attract and retain employees in any sector it is not only important to understand their capabilities and best fit in the workplace but also their desires from work and the ways and means which they intend to use to achieve those desires. However, due to generational differences, these wants and desires tend to vary across generations. Therefore, people from different generations may have problems understanding others' perspectives of the work, which can be stressful, confusing, and frustrating in any demanding workplace of the service sector (Zvikaite-Rotting, 2007).

Organizations across the world have viewed generational diversity as a negative phenomenon not realizing the immense potential of this generational blending. One of the most dominant and unique benefits of generational assortment is the scope for innovation and creativity. People who come together from different perspectives always have the potential to bring different thoughts and ideas to problem-solving. The potential for positive creative synergy is immense (Gursoy, Maier, & Chic, 2008).

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

No research is complete without considering the previous researches, it will be correct to say that most of the researches are the extensions of the thoughts given by the earlier thinkers and different school of thoughts. The business world is becoming increasingly global. Services and products offered by businesses are also becoming more focused and targeted at specific demographic segments. In addition, many organizations today have clients all over the world who demand excellent services and products that meet their diverse needs, expectations and priorities.

At the same time, the composition of the workforce today is changing significantly. The Silent Generation and the first wave of Baby Boomers are beginning to retire from the workplace, taking decades of valuable experience with them, while Generation X ("Gen X") and Generation Y ("Gen Y") are becoming the fastest growing age groups in the workforce and the next generation of leaders. As the globalization of work continues and the age composition of the workforce changes, understanding and leveraging the differences between generational groups is critical for organizations to continue motivating and engaging a multi-generational workforce for optimum performance. With the current workplace being the most generationally diverse than it has ever been, intergeneration management has become extremely complex. While working within multi-generational relationships in the workplace presents some challenges, understanding and managing generational diversity can bring an array of benefits and perspectives to the workplace, such as improved talent attraction, retention and engagement, enhanced workplace productivity, increased competitive advantage that keeps customers loyal and an expanded view of succession planning and excellent leadership bench strength. Responding to challenges in a multi-generational workforce requires the same skills needed to manage other diversity issues, which include moving beyond superficial awareness, adapting communication styles, and effectively managing different needs and expectations. Organizations with a diverse group of people from different age groups offering a range of views, opinions and perspectives are almost always going to be more effective, more likely to produce creative and innovative approaches, and have a greater long-term advantage over their competitors. Workplace diversity is a growing business concern and an essential source of competitive advantage for organizations in the ever-growing global economy.

Understanding and managing diversity in the workplace typically generates discussions of gender, race, ethnicity or disability. However, there is this one slice of diversity that has been getting considerably more attention in the recent years: Generational Diversity. With the entry of Generation Y (“Gen Y”) to the working world, the workforce for the first time consists of people from all major age groups – Baby Boomers, Generation X (‘Gen X’), and Generation Y (‘Gen Y’) – working together to achieve business and organizational goals. While this presents an exciting phase of growth and new opportunities for organizations, it also gives rise to a new set of challenges due to the different needs, values, priorities, perspectives, and work ethics among the different generations.

Understanding generational differences and managing the expectations of the various age groups is not an easy task but one that can enable organizations to build a sustainable talent pipeline and leadership bench-strength as well as propel organizations into new dimensions of performance. Generational diversity brings an array of benefits and perspectives to the workplace. However, working within multigenerational relationships can also generate workplace challenges because of different needs and expectations that can cause intergenerational conflict in the workplace. Although there is a high level of understanding about generational differences in the workplace, almost 50% of employees in the Asia Pacific acknowledged that intergenerational differences can lead to serious conflicts in the workplace.

Managing and leveraging generational diversity in the workplace is not the sole responsibility of human resources or senior management. Even though they may play a key role in designing, supporting, and deploying strategies and training to build a multi-generational workforce, developing an atmosphere of diversity must rest on the shoulders of everyone in the organization. Now, more than ever, putting diversity to work in the workplace should be a common goal of employers and employees. Successful organizations that seek to understand each generational group and accommodate generational differences so as to capitalize on generational differences in attitudes, values, and behaviors at work will build a viable leadership bench strength and a talent pipeline for growth and sustainability.

Puja Kohli, an independent human resources consultant, conducted a study titled, “Managing in a Multigenerational Workplace,” in collaboration with the National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom). The objective of this study was to understand the competencies needed to manage millennials in the information technology/information technology enabled services (IT/ITeS) sector, which is among the largest recruiters of youth in India. More than 60% of the employees in this sector are less than 30 years of age.

In her study, Kohli focused primarily on five areas: Values, interpersonal relationships, commitment, work ethics and worldview. Kohli notes: “The need to build skills and competencies, freedom and empowerment are the topmost priorities for the youth in this sector, followed by recognition and appreciation.” Interestingly, the need for freedom and empowerment spans a host of issues: vocabulary, dress code, flexi-time, work-life balance, use of social media and so on.

Dilpreet Singh, vice president of human resources at IBM India & South Asia, observes: “This is a generation that is not hierarchical in its outlook. It respects competencies and knowledge and not so much authority that simply comes with age or position.” And herein lies the rub: In most organizations, policies are created by a group of senior people who don’t understand the mindset of the youth. Som Mittal, who until recently was president of Nasscom, says: “We find that the gap between the traditional outlook of people who are taking decisions and those who are getting impacted by these decisions is increasing. This is resulting in a mismatch.”

What is at stake if this gap continues to increase? Last year, Deloitte and the Confederation of Indian Industries

released a report titled, “Gen Next Workforce Study, 2013.” Based on its findings, the study says that: “The evolving preferences of the current generation in India pose perplexing challenges for organizations looking at attracting, engaging and retaining them.” If organizations don’t address the issues arising out of a multigenerational workforce, it can result in “a lower engagement rate, loss in productivity and a higher attrition rate.” It could also lead to a “situation of unrest among the workforce. Ultimately, the output from the investment in human capital will be much lower than its true potential.”

It is understood that, if organizations don’t take appropriate steps, “they will lose out on the best talent and what it can do for them,” Singh of IBM notes. “They will lose out on new ideas. This will severely impact an organization’s competitiveness. At a national level, India will lose out on the human resource that can take it forward.”

So what is it that companies need to do? According to ISB’s Nandkeolyar, firms must emphasize the commonalities that bind all employees together and deemphasize the differences, especially in terms of age and experience. “We need to understand, celebrate and encourage diversity in the workplace. This will help all employees to work toward a common goal.” According to Mittal of Nasscom, the generational gap can be bridged through constant dialogue. “We need to break hierarchical boundaries and involve all generations of employees in decision making.”

Nirmala Menon, founder and CEO of Interweave Consulting, which focuses on diversity management and inclusivity in the workplace, believes that senior employees need to be more open to adjusting and changes since the workforce and the workplace will now be increasingly defined by younger employees. “It’s more a mindset issue than chronological age. One needs to be open to accepting differences, whatever they may be. A one-size-fits-all approach will not work,” she says.

According to Subhro Bhaduri, executive vice president at Kotak Mahindra Bank, companies need to provide “high clarity, sharp direction, in-depth job knowledge and abundant skills” to their young employees, along with keeping them abreast of the latest developments in their industry. “The current generation is keen to know what they are doing, why they are doing it and what they would derive from the same,” Bhaduri says. “The new workforce is also keen to get variety in roles and functional areas in order to remain excited about work. In addition, there is an increased aspiration level and corresponding growth expectations which have to be managed.”

Saundarya Rajesh, HR professional and founder-director of Avtar Careers Creators and Flexi Careers India, suggests that organizations must invest in building “generational competence” — that is, “firms must develop a greater awareness of what influences shape each cohort without stereotyping.” According to Rajesh, organizations must work toward developing a “salsa culture, which is a sum of many parts and where each part retains its unique identity.” Rajesh adds that organizations also must “target the right talent strategies to the right set of employees.”

From the words of these organizational experts, it is understood that GenY has the reputation of being one of the most challenging generations. Having grown up in a culturally diverse school and play environment they are also one of the most confident, competent and best-educated generations in history.

## **JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RESEARCH**

Thanks to India’s population growth, the working-age population (aged 15-64) has increased in India since the 1980s, contributing to strong economic growth. According to census data, the population of India is 1210 million (2011). Out of this, 29.7% of the population is between 0 and 14 years of age, 64.9% between 15 and 64 years of age and 5.5% above 65 years (Census of India, 2011). This working-age population represents three different generations working

together. India has more than 50% of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65% hovers below the age of 35. It is expected that, in 2020, the average age of an Indian will be 29 years which implies that various generations would be working side by side and with each other. To address the problem of generational diversity it is essential to better understand the inter-regional variations, in India's age structure. In terms of variations there are differences even between rural and urban India in the context of the different stages of evolution.

## OBJECTIVES

- To ascertain the perspective of H. R's towards multi-generations in the workplace.
- To ascertain how Gen X and Gen Y HR's perceive multi-generations.
- To assess HR perception towards Gen Z employees.
- To analyze the occurrence of positive & negative workplace activities where generational differences play a role.

## METHODOLOGY

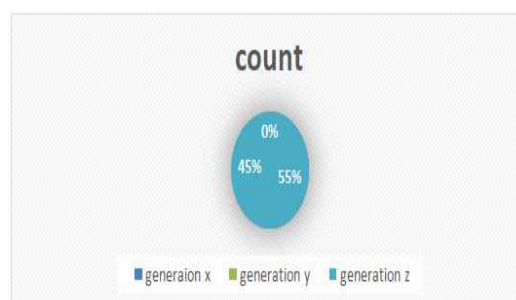
A survey method was used and the study is conducted on HR's of organizations. The sample size chosen for the study is 20 HR's of different sectors like IT, Pharma, Manufacturing etc. Primary data is collected with the help of a questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section deals with demographic details of the students and the second section deals with 19 bipolar statements. It is based on a five-point scale. Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to determine the internal consistency, homogeneity, and unidimensionality of the measuring instrument (Clark & Watson, 1995). Coefficient alpha contains important information regarding the proportion of variance of the items of a scale in terms of the total variance explained by the particular scale. Cronbach's alpha for the instrument is above 0.7. The data is analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Demographic Profile

**Table 1: Age (Generation) Wise Breakup of the Respondent HR's**

	Time Frame	Count	Percentage
GenerationX	53-39	11	55
Generation Y	38-18	9	45
Generation Z	17	0	0



**Figure 1**

### Interpretation



For the purpose of this research, the following generational boundaries have been considered. Gen X includes people born between years of 1965-1979 which accounts for 55% of respondents. Generation Y includes people born between years of 1980-2000 which accounts for 45% of respondents. Generation Z includes people born between years of 2001-2010 which accounts for 0% of respondents.

**Table 2: Designations of Respondents**

Designation	Count	Percentage
HR-Executive Level	13	65
HR-Manager Level	1	5
HR-GM	1	5
HR-VP	5	25

### Interpretation

The respondent HR's had diverse job roles and positions but for the ease of data analysis. they have been segregated in to 4 levels.

**HR:** executive level of position in the organization.

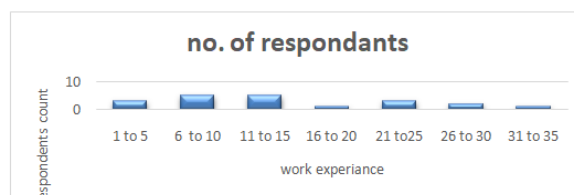
**Senior HR manager:** managerial middle cadre in the organization where he/she is responsible for a team of HR's.

**HR General Manager:** they are the middle-level cadre in the organization where he/she is responsible for a department of HR's or a branch office HR department of an organization.

**HR Vice President:** They are the second highest position before the chief and are responsible for maintaining all departments.

**Table 3: HR's Total Work Experience**

Work Experience	No. of Respondents
1-5	3
6-10	5
11-15	5
16-20	1
21-25	3
26-30	2
31-35	1



**Figure 2**

### Interpretation

The respondents were asked to provide their total work experience for the purpose of the study and have been segregated into the exclusive class interval.

### Differences in perception of HR towards Gen X, Gen Y & Gen Z

On the basis of literature review and the referred research articles, we have formed a questionnaire with 19 variables to analyze the perception of HR's towards employees of generation X, Y & Z. Here the respondents were asked to assume that generation z were their employees in order to bring out how they think generation z will act in corporate workplaces. Respondents were asked to mark their perception on a 5-point scale of 19 different polar statements for each of the 3 generations i.e., generation X, generation Y, generation Z and the responses were recorded. The data thus obtained is summarized by combining the value obtained through a simple average of the values obtained and the data is summarized into a table as below.

**Table 4: HR Perception on Multi Generations**

Overall Perception of HR's (as per Survey Conducted)				
Polar Statement	Generation X Average	Generation Y Average	Generation Z Average	Polar Statement
Question authority	3.9	3.35	3.6	Respect authority
Difficult to motivate	3.5	3.5	3.6	Easily motivated
Sceptical to recognition	3.7	4	3.95	Appreciate recognition
Loyal to themselves	3.7	3.45	3.65	Loyal the organization
Live to work (Workaholic)	3.35	3.9	4.05	Seek work-life balance
Not technologically confident	3.5	3.95	4.2	Technologically confident
Value monetary rewards only	3.3	3.65	4.2	Value both tangible and intangible work benefits
Resist change	3.45	3.85	4.1	Embrace change
Individualist	3.4	3.7	4.15	Team player
Lazy	3.65	3.6	3.65	Hard working
Need for constant supervision and guidance	3.45	3.45	3.75	Minimum need for supervision and guidance
Prefer rigid work schedule	3.75	4	4.15	Prefer flexible work schedule
Job seekers (short-term)	3.65	3.7	3.85	Career seekers (long-term)
Prefer micro-management	3.7	3.7	3.8	Prefer macro-management
Avoid off-work relationships with co-workers	3.7	3.55	3.9	Develop off-work relationships with co-workers
Hard learners	3.25	3.85	3.95	Easy learners
Prefer single-tasking	3.7	3.7	4	Prefer multi-tasking
unreliable	3.75	4.05	3.75	Reliable
Respect seekers	3.7	3.85	3.85	Respect earners

From the table, we can see that the polar statements were placed along with the averages obtained. The scale was set in a way that, an average of 1 denotes completely accepting the 1<sup>st</sup> statement while an average of 5 denotes completely accepting the 2<sup>nd</sup> statement.

### Interpretation

#### Question Authority vs Respect Authority

In the table, we can see that HR's perceived generation x (3.9) to be more towards respecting authority.

While generation z (3.6) occupied 2<sup>nd</sup> place, generation y (3.35) was expected to be more towards questioning the authority. The inference is in line with the published research where authors perceived generation z to more respecting to authority than generation y.

#### **Difficult to Motive vs Easy to Motive**

We can observe in the table that generation Z (3.6) were perceived to be easier to motivate that both generation x (3.5) and generation y (3.5). This is completely in line with the published research as research shows that generation z is expected to be easier to motivate through rewards and incentives as they come to enjoy the work more because of it.

#### **Sceptical to Recognition vs Appreciate Recognition**

HR's have perceived that generation y (4) appreciate recognition more than other generations. They were followed by generation z (3.95) and then generation x (3.7) in terms of appreciating the recognition.

#### **Loyal to Themselves vs Loyal to Organization**

Loyalty to the organization is greatest in generation x (3.7) while generation z (3.65) followed them and last is occupied by generation y (3.45) with a large gap between the other generations. This statement is also empirically proved in various research articles. Generation y tends to have high loyalty to themselves due to their behavior as a cohort and the influence of recession, wars etc., on them during their up bringing. And in the Indian context it is the effect of economic slowdown and lack of job opportunities and growth opportunities in the market at that time which forced the cohort to be more self-reliant.

#### **Live to Work (Workaholic) vs Seek Work-Life Balance**

It can be observed in the table of values that generation x (3.35) is more geared towards live to work while generation z (4.05) leads the pack in work life balance and generation y (3.9) is in middle. Work life balance is a gradually inculcating phenomenon during generation X period work is the main concern for everyone and family comes in the second but as of now it is gradually changing and we are looking towards work life balance.

#### **Not Technologically Confident vs Technologically Confident**

We can see that technical proficiency increased from generation X (3.5) to Generation Y (3.95) to Generation Z (4.2). Generation Z is undoubted technical generation they are very proficient in adapting to new technologies.

#### **Value Monetary Rewards only vs Value Both Tangible and Intangible Work Benefits**

Monetary rewards were more opted by generation X (3.3) and it reduced towards Generation Y (3.65) and finally it is perceived that Generation Z (4.2) values both tangible and intangible rewards. It is a proved fact that generation X due to their need of money they choose monetary rewards more but generation Z realises value of both monetary rewards and non-monetary rewards.

#### **Resist to Change vs Embrace Change**

Generation X (3.45) is more resilient to change while Generation Y is 2<sup>nd</sup> with 3.85 and Generation Z (4.1) embraces change. There is a large gap between generation X and other generations in terms of accepting change. Even though generation X is resilient to change Generation Y follows it closely while the gap is between Generation Y and Z due to societal changes between these generations

### **Individualist's Team Player**

Generation Z (4.15) is perceived to be more of a team player than generation Y (3.7) and Generation X (3.4). It is proven by various authors that generation z is geared towards team play.

### **Lazy vs Hardworking**

All three generations i.e., Generation X (3.65) Generation Y (3.6) Generation z (3.65) are perceived to be similar. It is discovered that generation Z can work harder with given motivation.

### **Need for Constant Supervision and Guidance vs Minimum Need for Supervision and Guidance**

Generation X (3.45) and generation Y (3.45) was perceived equally while generation Z (3.75) were given first place. It is observed in research that generation Z opts even more for minimal supervision.

### **Prefer Rigid Work Schedule vs Flexible Work Schedule**

Generation X (3.75) is geared towards rigid work schedules while generation Y (4.0) and Generation Z (4.15) were perceived to be geared towards flexible work schedules. It is observed in research articles that generation Y though interested in work schedule but were habituated to rigid work schedules

### **Job Seekers (Short Term) vs Career Seekers (Long Term)**

Generation Z (3.85) and generation Y (3.7) were more of career seekers than generation X (3.65). Generation X and Generation Y were geared towards job seekers than which was perceived by HR's.

### **Prefer Micro Management vs Prefer Macro Management**

All three i.e., Generation X (3.7) Generation Y (3.7) generation Z (3.8) were perceived to be geared towards macro management. Even though macro management was preferred majority of the cases HRs use micro management.

### **Hard Learner vs Easy Learner**

It is perceived by HRs that Generation Y (3.85) and Generation Z (3.95) were perceived to be more of an easy learner than Generation X (3.25). It is observed that generation Z is more towards easy learners due to their education and technology than it was perceived

### **Prefer Single Tasking vs Prefer Multi-Tasking**

Generation Z (4.0) were perceived to be more towards multi-tasking than Generation X (3.7) and generation Y (3.7). It is accurate since researchers have proven that due to technological advancements generation Z is more advanced in multi-tasking which is a rare phenomenon in generation X.

**Table 5: Overall Mean of Gen X, Y & Z**

	<b>Generation X</b>	<b>Generation Y</b>	<b>Generation Z</b>
Mean	3.58	3.73	3.90
Standard Deviation	0.18	0.21	0.20

### **Interpretation**

It is observed that the difference in perception of HR's on GenX, Gen Y & Gen Z are less which symbolises that

HR's in general are indifferent in perception or inclined towards positive side.

#### HR's Perception Differences Based on their Age

- HR's who belong to generation X
- HR's who belong to generation Y
- HR's who belong to generation Z

The segregated data thus obtained is pooled and a simple average is taken to calculate their average perception.

**Table 6: Gen X HR's Perception on Multigenerations**

Generation x HR's Overall Perception(as per Survey Conducted)				
Polar Statement	Generation X Average	Generation Y Average	Generation Z Average	Polar Statement
Question authority	3.82	3.09	3.55	Respect authority
Difficult to motivate	3.91	3.45	3.64	Easily motivated
Sceptical to recognition	3.91	4.00	4.09	Appreciate recognition
Loyal to themselves	3.64	3.36	3.73	Loyal the organization
Live to work (Workaholic)	3.45	3.82	4.00	Seek work-life balance
Not technologically confident	3.55	3.91	4.27	Technologically confident
Value monetary rewards only	3.27	3.64	4.09	Value both tangible and intangible work benefits
Resist change	3.45	3.82	4.27	Embrace change
Individualist	3.45	3.64	4.09	Team player
Lazy	3.55	3.64	3.64	Hard working
Need for constant supervision and guidance	3.64	3.18	3.55	Minimum need for supervision and guidance
Prefer rigid work schedule	3.82	4.09	4.27	Prefer flexible work schedule
Job seekers (short-term)	3.64	3.73	3.82	Career seekers (long-term)
Prefer micro-management	3.55	3.45	3.82	Prefer macro-management
Avoid off-work relationships with co-workers	3.82	3.64	3.82	Develop off-work relationships with co-workers
Hard learners	3.27	3.64	3.82	Easy learners
Prefer single-tasking	4.00	3.73	3.82	Prefer multi-tasking
Unreliable	3.82	4.18	3.64	Reliable
Respect seekers	3.64	3.73	3.64	Respect earners
<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>3.87</b>	
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>0.25</b>	

The above table contains the average perception of generation x HR's towards various generations of employees.

**Table 7: Difference between the Overall Perception and the Perception of Generation X HR's**

Difference in Perceptions between Overall Perception of HR's and Generation x HR's		
Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z
0.08	0.26	0.05
-0.41	0.05	-0.04
-0.21	0.00	-0.14
0.06	0.09	-0.08

-0.10	0.08	0.05
-0.05	0.04	-0.07
<b>Table 7: Contd.,</b>		
0.03	0.01	0.11
0.00	0.03	-0.17
-0.05	0.06	0.06
0.10	-0.04	0.01
-0.19	0.27	0.20
-0.07	-0.09	-0.12
0.01	-0.03	0.03
0.15	0.25	-0.02
-0.12	-0.09	0.08
-0.02	0.21	0.13
-0.30	-0.03	0.18
-0.07	-0.13	0.11
0.06	0.12	0.21

### Interpretation

It can be seen that the largest difference between the generation x HR's and overall HR perception is seen in:

- 'Difficult to motivate vs Easy to motivate' in perceiving generation x employees. Here the generation x HR's held a better (0.41 better) view than the general view.
- 'Need for constant supervision and guidance vs Minimum need for supervision and guidance' in perceiving generation y employees. Here the generation x HR's held lower (0.27 lower) view than the general view.

**Table 8: Gen Y HR's Perception on Multi Generations**

<b>Generation Y HR's Overall Perception (as per Survey Conducted)</b>				
<b>Polar Statement</b>	<b>Generation-x Average</b>	<b>Generation-y Average</b>	<b>Generation-z Average</b>	<b>Polar Statement</b>
<b>Question Authority</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>Respect Authority</b>
Difficult to motivate	3.00	3.56	3.56	Easily motivated
Sceptical to recognition	3.44	4.00	3.78	Appreciate recognition
Loyal to themselves	3.78	3.56	3.56	Loyal the organization
Live to work (Workaholic)	3.22	4.00	4.11	Seek work-life balance
Not technologically confident	3.44	4.00	4.11	Technologically confident
Value monetary rewards only	3.33	3.67	4.33	Value both tangible and intangible work benefits
Resist change	3.44	3.89	3.89	Embrace change
Individualist	3.33	3.78	4.22	Team player
Lazy	3.78	3.56	3.67	Hard working
Need for constant supervision and guidance	3.22	3.78	4.00	Minimum need for supervision and guidance
Prefer rigid work schedule	3.67	3.89	4.00	Prefer flexible work schedule
Job seekers (short-term)	3.67	3.67	3.89	Career seekers (long-term)
Prefer micro-management	3.89	4.00	3.78	Prefer macro-management
Avoid off-work relationships with co-workers	3.56	3.44	4.00	Develop off-work relationships with co-workers
Hard learners	3.22	4.11	4.11	Easy learners
Prefer single-tasking	3.33	3.67	4.22	Prefer multi-tasking

Unreliable	3.67	3.89	3.89	Reliable
Respect seekers	3.78	4.00	4.11	Respect earners
<b>MEAN</b>	3.51	3.80	3.94	
<b>STANDARD DEVIATION</b>	0.27	0.20	0.23	

The above table contains the average perception of generation Y HR's towards various multi generations.

**Table 9: Difference between the Overall Perception and the Perception of Generation Y HR's**

<b>Difference in Perception between Overall Perception of HR's and Generation Y HR's</b>		
<b>Generation X</b>	<b>Generation Y</b>	<b>Generation Z</b>
-0.10	-0.32	-0.07
0.50	-0.06	0.04
0.26	0.00	0.17
-0.08	-0.11	0.09
0.13	-0.10	-0.06
0.06	-0.05	0.09
-0.03	-0.02	-0.13
0.01	-0.04	0.21
0.07	-0.08	-0.07
-0.13	0.04	-0.02
0.23	-0.33	-0.25
0.08	0.11	0.15
-0.02	0.03	-0.04
-0.19	-0.30	0.02
0.14	0.11	-0.10
0.03	-0.26	-0.16
0.37	0.03	-0.22
0.08	0.16	-0.14
-0.08	-0.15	-0.26

### Interpretation

The largest difference between the generation Y HR's and overall HR perception is seen in:

- 'Difficult to motivate vs Easy to motivate' in perceiving generation Y employees. Here the generation Y HR's held a lower (0.50 lower) view than the general view.
- 'Need for constant supervision and guidance vs Minimum need for supervision and guidance' in perceiving generation Y employees. Here the generation Y HR's held better (0.33 better) view than the general view.

### FINDINGS

In the present chapter the major findings of the research work are being listed, and then on the basis of these findings certain some important recommendations are made.

- HR's perceived that Gen Y employees accept more change in the workplace than Gen X.
- Gen X employee expects more supervision whereas Gen Z employees (yet to be) rejects such supervision.
- In comparison with Gen X & Gen Y, Gen Z prefers more flexible working hours.
- All three generations preferred macro management over micromanagement.
- Gen X HR's viewed that Gen X employees are easier to motivate whereas Gen Y employees require the higher

need for supervision.

- Gen Y HR's viewed that Gen X employees are difficult to motivate whereas Gen Y employees require lesser need for supervision.
- All generations expect the change in work-life balance policies.
- Due to entry of Gen Z organizations should build better team building strategies.
- HR had a consistent better view about Gen Z over other generations.
- Generation Z is expected to be more loyal to the organization and respecting authority than Gen Y.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

Organizational success aims to achieve competitive advantage and to ensure business sustainability in the long run. Leveraging and capitalizing on the value of generational diversity is important to achieve this end. It can contribute to

- Improved talent attraction and retention.
- Increased employee commitment.
- Enhanced workplace productivity.
- Expanded view of succession planning and building leadership bench strength.

Given below are some suggestions to bridge the generation gap, so as to harness and maximize the limitless capabilities of a multigenerational workforce.

- HR should understand the importance of tangible and intangible work benefits as generation Z is more geared towards.
- HR should improve macro management over micromanagement.
- Employees expect change in work life balance policies.
- Each generation and their unique perspective should be acknowledged and incorporated through the implementation of organizational policies. HR needs to leverage the strengths of each generation and understand how individuals in different generations act and react.
- Large differences in perceptions about other generations lead to the creation of HR policies which hinder employee performance and the create friction and dissatisfaction in employee mindsets and hence HR's should remove their bias during creation of HR policies.
- Perceptions differ with generations which are a natural phenomenon but, in the research, we could observe that there were large differences also which need urgent rectification through orientation and talk sessions etc., to remove the stereotyping and prejudice in them.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

As globalization of work continues and the age composition of the workforce changes, understanding and



leveraging the difference between generational groups is critical for organizations so as to continue motivating and engaging a multigenerational workforce for optimum performance. As work teams become more and more diverse, becoming acutely aware of the cultural, experiential, skillset, expectations and communication difference between generational groups is critical to connect with not only colleagues but also clients, customers and other stakeholders. To aim for competitive advantage and sustained business success, the organizations must strive to leverage the differences among the diversified generational workforce. We see that even in the HR's the effect of generations and their generic perceptions are evident and influencing their daily decision-making abilities. Generations will continue to move forward and continue to grow more complex, different and ever changing, it is the role of HR to step away from generational stereotyping and take effective decisions which create strong employee engagement and remove disputes and disruptions in the organizations.

HR's have to observe that generations continue to change and each time the perspectives, value systems and characteristics of employees change. The division of the population into generational cohorts is purely for convenience purpose to observe the common traits in the population, but in reality, generational differences exist even in the same cohorts due to their unique life experience as they grow up. HR's should strive to create policies which ignore the effects of their inherent stereotyping.

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